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How Covert Talks Resurrected Joe Biden's Programme and Stunned Washington



Published 2 days ago on August 2, 2022
By **Dr.Luciano Magaldi**

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When news of President Joe Biden's long-stalled domestic agenda broke out of Washington, it was the middle of the night in Saudi Arabia. Again.

The offender was well known. The enormous plan for the environment, taxes, and social safety net raised concerns from Sen. Joe Manchin, a moderate Democrat from West Virginia. The news was received with annoyance and outrage in Jeddah, where Biden was holding tense meetings with Saudi leaders, but not astonishment.

Fortunes have changed after 13 days, two Covid infections, and a few acrimonious arguments. Manchin and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer stunned the majority of Washington on Wednesday when they revealed that they had reached an agreement on a version of Biden's

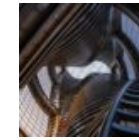


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protracted climate, energy, and tax agenda after restarting their negotiations in secret four days after they had broken down.

Manchin was sure to underline that the bill's previous name, Build Back Better, had been dropped. It is less than half the size of Biden's original bill. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 is anything but a done deal because Republicans are uniformly opposed and several Democrats in the Senate and House have not yet signed on.

But the accord gave ambitions that many Democrats had mostly set aside fresh life after appearing dormant for months. The President's legislative prospects are improving after a bill to increase US computer chip manufacture was passed on Thursday.

On Wednesday, after mostly giving up on formal meetings with Manchin after witnessing the senator repeatedly thwart his agenda, Biden spoke to the senator, who is spending time alone in the West Virginia highlands with Covid. Since December, they had not made a formal call on the Democratic agenda.

A day later, when news of the unexpected events was being announced in the State Dining Room of the White House, Biden observed, "The job of the government may be slow, frustrating, and sometimes even aggravating." "For those who don't give up, the hours, days, and months of arduous work eventually pay off. It is accomplished. Life is altered."

The agreement on taxes and climate change was nearly entirely negotiated in secrecy, so when it was revealed on Wednesday in the late afternoon, many people were caught off guard. Sen. Tina Smith of Minnesota tweeted, "Holy shit." "Stunned—in a good way, nonetheless."

That mindset was a far cry from the Democratic Party's attitude on July 14, when Manchin publicly undermined the energy and climate policies that had been the cornerstone of the Biden administration's commitment to drastically cut carbon emissions.

The President's domestic agenda suffered a setback two weeks ago, but the White House was hardly surprised given how frequently it had been dying during the previous year. By that time,

senior administration officials had developed a highly dubious perspective on the discussions between Manchin and Schumer about restarting the President's plans.

Biden had been largely exempted from the conversations, as he was quick to note himself.

When a reporter questioned whether Joe Manchin was negotiating in good faith on July 15 inside the Waldorf Astoria hotel in Jeddah, he responded, "I didn't bargain with Joe Manchin."

"I don't know." Concerns were raised regarding the most recent inflation statistics by the Senate's most conservative Democrat. According to a report on July 14, inflation reached a 40-year high in June, rising 9.1 percent over the previous year.

Manchin recalled the meeting he had with Schumer after the two had been in secret discussions about renewing Biden's climate agenda for three months: "When that 9.1 came in, I said, 'I can't, I just can't do it.'" At that point, Chuck became irate.

It wasn't always a cool, collected conversation.

Manchin admitted that occasionally his temper gets the better of him and that certain people had "let the dogs out" on him because he allegedly walked away from the agreement.

But by the next week, the two senators had cooled things down. On July 18, Manchin asked Schumer if he was still furious as they passed one another in a hallway of the Capitol.

"This is ludicrous," I responded," Manchin spoken. "Check our calibration and see if there is anything we can do. To his credit, he responds, "OK."

Manchin approached Schumer that day with an offer: "Can we work together and attempt to put together a bill?" Schumer said at a news conference on Thursday. But even then, the timetable was hazy.

Manchin had previously stated that he would wait until he saw the inflation data for August before taking any action on the climate until September. Manchin was told unequivocally by Schumer that a climate agreement needed to be completed before then. I told them, "We're not waiting for September as long as we finish it in August," Schumer said.

Despite Manchin's initial opposition, Schumer persisted with proposals that the West Virginian could back. The aide claimed that the senator eventually returned and expressed his willingness to proceed with an August deadline.

He made a few promises and gave some concessions that helped win his support. Tax increases on Americans with high incomes, which were supported by Biden and other Democrats, were excluded from the final bill. And Manchin has made it clear that he would not have joined the effort unless Democratic leaders made a commitment to pass legislation dealing with energy infrastructure permitting, which might make it easier for a shale gas pipeline in West Virginia.

Meanwhile, former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers privately contacted Manchin to explain that the agreement would not increase inflation but would instead be deflationary. Summers had already offered early inflation warnings last year, frequently to the chagrin of the Biden administration.

In a CNN interview, Summers refrained from commenting on his private chats but provided reassurance in response to concerns that the law might increase inflation. He added on "New Day" that the bill "fights inflation and has a whole series of collateral advantages as well."

Summers wasn't the only one working behind the scenes for Manchin.

Sen. John Hickenlooper, a Democrat from Colorado, informed reporters that the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania was providing analysis of the tax and climate pact to him and his staff.

Hickenlooper told reporters, "We knew that (Manchin) trusted Wharton and that he'd utilized that for modeling before. "So we asked them to act out this. After doing that, we received modeling indicating that this is not at all inflationary, and we submitted that to Joe."

Hickenlooper claimed he was seeking to add to the chorus of voices persuading Manchin that the agreement will lower inflation. Similar arguments were being made by other senators,

such as Chris Coons of Delaware, Brian Schatz of Hawaii, and Smith, according to Hickenlooper.

Hickenlooper said, “I was listening to whatever Joe indicated he had a problem with, and I was trying to fix it. I believed him when he said that inflation was the issue and that the rest could be resolved.

Senior officials at the White House were purposefully kept out of direct discussions despite being aware that important ones were taking place, according to administration aides. People close to Biden have been reluctant to involve him in yet another round of political battle for fear that talks would again break down.

In a radio appearance on Thursday, Manchin stated that “President Biden was not involved.” “I wasn’t going to let the President in because I didn’t think it was fair, and this situation very possibly could have been avoided. It had every chance of going wrong. I had to check to see if this was doable.”

It wasn’t until the very end of the deal that White House officials received a thorough reading of its contents. One insider told CNN that it was “extremely well-kept secret.”

Biden and Manchin both contracted Covid over the past few days as the deal was coming together. Manchin was alone in his home state’s mountains while Biden worked from the White House.

By Wednesday, Manchin and Schumer had reached an understanding; they made the announcement just after the Senate passed the legislation pertaining to computer chips. Since Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell had pledged to reject the microchip measure if Democrats introduced a package containing Biden’s agenda, several people considered the timing to be less than fortuitous.

According to Senate Republican Whip John Thune, “I think everyone got startled, definitely by claims that had been made by Democrats about this arrangement, and I believe there was some level of folks getting ambushed — not only on our side but on the Democrats’ side.”

You'll have to speak with McConnell about that, he responded when asked if he handled the transaction well.

Democrats face what is likely still an uphill battle in gaining enough support for the package, even among members of their own party, despite their celebrations on Thursday. Schumer assured Democrats Thursday in a speech delivered behind closed doors that they were ready to enact measures they had been discussing for years.

The next 10 days will require us to stick together and put in long days and nights, he stated. "We must maintain focus and discipline in our messaging. It'll be difficult."

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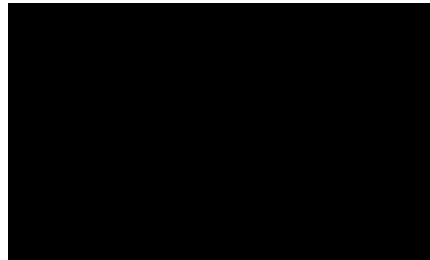
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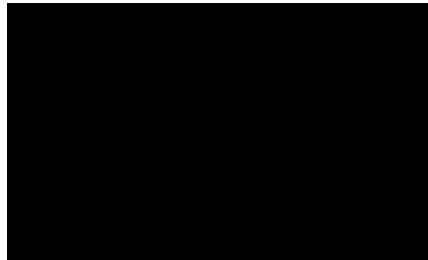
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Dr Luciano Magaldi is a Security Engineer with deep expertise in cybersec, new technologies and international geopolitics. He is an Honorary Member at White House Historical Association and Official Alumnus at Stanford Alumni Association - Club of Los Angeles, and at Cambridge at Harvard Alumni for Education Association. He is an Opinion Contributor for the 'New York Weekly', the 'London School of Economics of London - The London Globalist' and 'Modern Diplomacy'. He worked for Google Ireland, Apple European Headquarters, Amazon Slovakia and Microsoft Portugal.

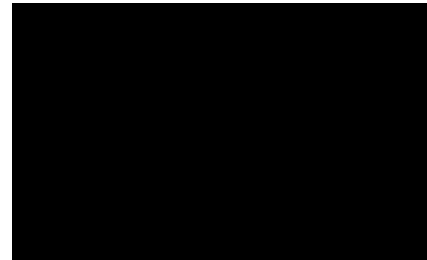
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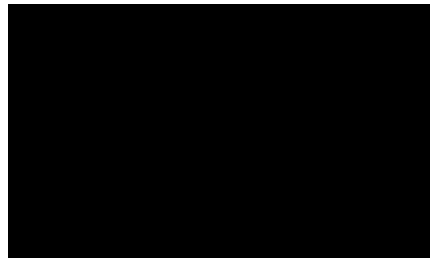
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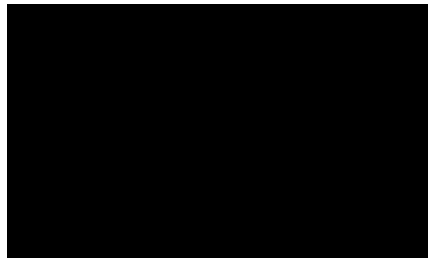
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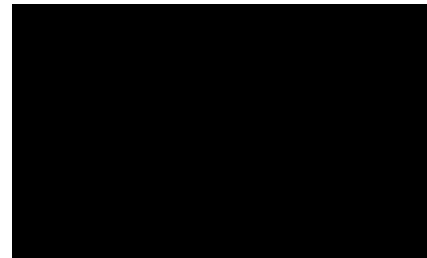
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How likely is a nuclear WW III, U.S.-China?



Published 2 days ago on August 2, 2022

By **Eric Zuesse**

Whereas U.S. voters don't want the U.S. Government to go to World War Three against Russia over Ukraine, they do want it to go to WW III against China over Taiwan.

A poll in U.S., ["Conducted 01/12/22 – 01/14/22"](#), by the Trafalgar Group, surveying "1081 Respondents" who were "Likely General Election Voters" found that 58.1% said "Yes," and

41.9% said “No,” to “Do you believe the Biden Administration should use U.S. military assets to defend Taiwan if Taiwan is invaded by China?” Far lower percentages of Americans turned out to be supportive of going to war against Russia over Ukraine.

Nancy Pelosi, who leads Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives, has made clear that she wants to visit Taiwan in August, to encourage Taiwan’s leaders to declare Taiwan’s independence from China, which is something that the U.S. Government has never publicly supported, and which – ever since the 28 February 1972 U.S.-China agreement called the

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Heroes and American Politics



Published 4 days ago on July 31, 2022

By **Newsroom**

From the time America gained independence, a lot has been discussed about heroes. Politicians may define a hero as someone who supports their political ambitions. They may define them as someone who doesn't criticize their government.

A journalist may define a hero as someone who suffers police brutality. A child can define a hero as a provider such as a parent or a teacher. In any typical scenario, the definition of a hero depends on who is defining it. Nevertheless, there is a big divide between how politicians, media, and ordinary citizens describe heroes.

What qualifies someone to be called a hero or heroine?

In any society, there will always be a hero, but heroes are hard to find. Different researchers have given varying definitions of a hero. Among them are Zimbardo, Franco, and Blau. In their research, they have defined a hero by three main characteristics.

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Colombia: New government urged to combat rising violence in rural areas



Published 1 week ago on July 27, 2022

By **Newsroom**

The incoming administration in Colombia must prioritize tackling rising violence perpetrated by non-State armed groups and criminal organizations in rural areas, the UN human rights office, OHCHR, said in a report published on Tuesday.

The violence is having a devastating impact, particularly on women and children, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, community leaders and human rights defenders.

Colombia’s new government takes office next month, and the report outlines a series of recommendations that should be implemented urgently to protect lives and uphold the rights of those affected.

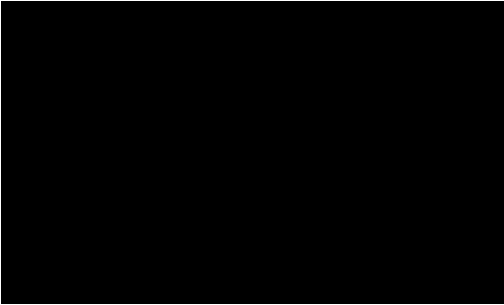
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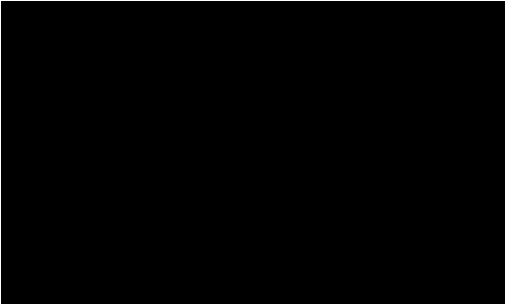
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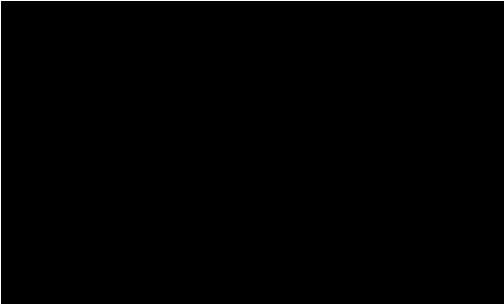
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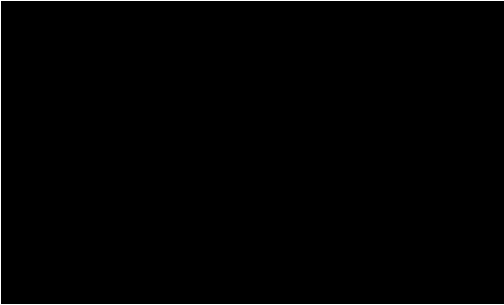
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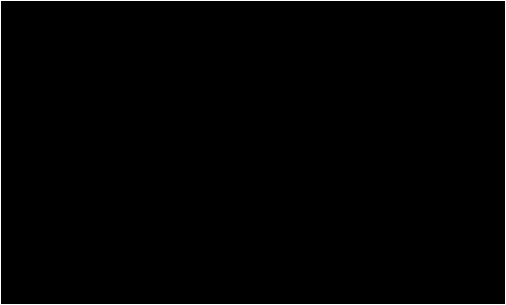
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